

# E Gram

## It's a Wonderful Life

Every year, one of my favorite Christmas traditions is to watch the Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*. The film champions idea that living is all about giving ourselves to those in need. With the help of his guardian angel Clarence, George Bailey glimpses what the world would be like without his generous, caring life. The film always brings a tear to my eyes. Every person can have a life -changing impact in another person's life.

The film inevitably brings me right back to the present. What would the community look like without Communities In Schools? More kids would drop out of school and go through life with a severe deficiency. Each day, CIS is engaged with kids who are struggling with so many challenges in their lives that spill over into a lack of performance in school. CIS wraps a blanket of support around these students at a time when they need it most.

As 2011 comes to an end, I salute my staff f "George Baileys" who day after day are changing lives one at a time. The founder of CIS, Bill Milliken, reminds us that a one to one relationship with a caring adult can make all the difference when working with at-risk youth. It certainly did in his life.

I also want to thank those who make CIS possible: our friends and donors. Without you, 2900 kids would not have received CIS services last year. In this season of hope, I am grateful for all of you. Thanks for making a brighter future for our kids.

Tim Mulligan, Executive Director



## Easton Area Academy Addresses Bullying and Harassment

Two CIS staff developed an anti -bullying and harassment workshop for students at the Easton Area Academy. The workshop took place during the afterschool program.

First, students traced the outline of two bodies on a large piece of paper as the class wrote down as many insults and "put-downs" that they could think of. They wrote these words on the outline and then the students ripped and crumble the outlined body. Next, students were asked to put the pieces together. Because of the destruction, this was not possible. CIS staff then led a discussion about bullying and harassment and how the victim can be affected so deeply that he or she is never the same. The students were able to identify and many took responsibility for their actions regarding bullying and harassment. Two CIS staff, Danielle and Katrina, took the lead in creating and implementing this activity for the students

Tylynn Torres, Site Director Easton Area Academy

## Did You Know...

*CIS is the lead partner in the United Way Compass Community Schools at Lincoln Elementary and Calypso Elementary Schools in Bethlehem and the South Mountain Middle School in Allentown. CIS site coordinators/directors broker community resources, organize afterschool programming, and work with principals to make the school a hub of community life.*

*CIS provides 90 students from 6 Allentown schools with college mentors from DeSales University, Muhlenberg College, Penn State Lehigh Valley, Moravian College, Lehigh Carbon Community College, and Northampton Community College. Mentors focus on character development and academic support for students.*

***The mission of Communities In Schools is to empower students to achieve, stay in school and prepare for life.***



## Lehigh Valley Steel Hawks

Communities In Schools is an official partner of the Lehigh Valley Steel Hawks. The Steel Hawks will highlight CIS at their March 17 home football game during "Education Night." We would encourage all of our friends and supporters to attend the 7pm game at Stabler Arena. Beginning February 1, purchase \$10 or \$15 tickets directly from CIS and \$3 of each ticket will directly benefit CIS programs. <http://www.lvsteelhawks.com/>

## HOPE students Enjoy the "Lights Tour"

HOPE students were invited to participate in a driving tour of holiday lights and decorations through Allentown to see a portion of The Morning Call's own Mr. Bill White's famous "Lights Tour". Students from Allen High School and Trexler Middle School were jumping with joy when the luxury van pulled up to the school opening its doors just for them; the van was a donation from J&J Luxury Transportation arranged by Mr. White. The 1.5 hour tour took students around the community to witness the most elaborate displays of lights and decorations around! They even had a chance to get out at each stop to appreciate the full ambiance of the displays, which many included music, and to take pictures. The tour ended with a homemade cookie treat for each student to enjoy.

For a glimpse of what the students got to see on a portion of the famous tour, visit <http://www.mcall.com/entertainment/holidays/billwhite/> for pictures and descriptions of last year's complete tour.

Jennifer Denise, Director of Volunteers



## Still Time to Give to CIS in 2011

2011 is coming to a close. Consider a tax deductible gift to CIS. Every gift helps to keep kids in school! Credit card donations are accepted at <https://www.justgive.org/nonprofits/donate.jsp?ein=23-2222874>



Student art work from Success Academy in Allentown



## October Fund Raiser at MELT honors Matt Sorrentino

Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley held its annual fundraiser at Melt Restaurant in Center Valley, PA on October 20, 2011. This year, CISLV honored Matt Sorrentino, a board member for 10 years who served as board president from 2007-10. Don Cunningham, Lehigh County Executive and Shelley Brown, president and CEO of the State Theater Center for the Arts in Easton, PA provided toasts and recalled Matt's career, his dedication to his family, and his passion supporting causes that make a difference in the community. When it was Matt's turn, he spoke about Communities In Schools, its mission, his passion to see every child graduate from school and the impact CISLV has made in the Lehigh Valley. The event raised \$27,000.



## Remembering Joan Fuller

Joan Fuller, a great friend, supporter and board member for Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley died tragically in a car accident on October 10, 2011 while vacationing in California. Her husband Peter was seriously injured and continues a slow and difficult recovery. Joan and Peter were catalysts in bringing CIS to the Lehigh Valley in 1983 and they continued to guide CISLV as patrons and active board members ever since. With a commitment to helping children and promoting education, Joan will be remembered as a community activist who directed her time, talent and resources into helping children succeed in school and prepare for life. CIS will miss Joan Fuller and her warm, generous heart that always found a way to help children in need.





### Congratulations to CIS staff

**Lisa Regan** for completed the CIS Site Coordinator Certification Program through CIS National.

**Michael McCorristin** for completing 10 years of service to CIS

**Shelly Grim** for completing 5+ years of service to CIS.



### Remembering our Veterans at South Mountain Middle School

To celebrate Veterans' Day this year, each Social Studies class at South Mountain Middle School hosted a veteran in their class during the week of November 7th. Sixteen different veterans representing most of the major United States conflicts, including World War II, the Korean War, Vietnam War, and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq served as guest speakers in the Social Studies classes throughout the week. Each veteran discussed the important role the military plays in the history of the United States, as well as the sacrifices soldiers and their families make to protect citizens. Students were able to connect classroom learning to real life and experience a piece of living history. The week concluded with an appreciation breakfast for all of our guest speakers as well as selected students, staff and faculty who served their country in the military. The veterans were presented with patriotic themed art work created by students of South Mountain Middle School, as a thank you for their gift of time to South Mountain, but also as a thank you for their service to the United States. South Mountain Middle School is a Community School in partnership with Communities In Schools of the Lehigh Valley and United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley. The breakfast was made possible by a donation from Air Products and Chemicals and the Kiwanis Foundation of Allentown. A special thanks to The United States Marine Corps. Reserve Center in Allentown PA Battery 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Marines; The Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council, The United Veterans Association, and the Lehigh County Office of Veterans Affairs for helping to recruit volunteers to speak to our students.

Wendv Seiffert, Site Director South Mountain Middle School

## New Staff at CIS

**Arlene Gonzalez** is the Community School Activities Coordinator at Lincoln Elementary School in Bethlehem. Arlene formerly worked for Kids Peace and brings experience in working with at-risk youth. The Lincoln Elementary School community has opened its arms to welcome Arlene.



**Andrew Reidi** is the Community School Activities Coordinator at South Mountain Middle School in Allentown. Andrew was immediately welcomed back since he was a former physical education teacher at the same school. Andrew is a great addition to the South Mountain team.



**Jordan Shafer** is the part-time Program Aide in the CIS Volunteer office. As a full-time student at Muhlenberg College, Jordan is a senior completing a double major. Jordan will assist with The HOPE mentor program and provide administrative support.



## Spirit of Volunteerism Award to T-Mobile

Wendy Seiffert, Director South Mountain Middle School, presented T-Mobile with a Spirit of Volunteerism Award at Steel Stacks on November 17, 2011. Sponsored by the Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley, the event highlighted extraordinary volunteer efforts in the Lehigh Valley. Wendy nominated T-Mobile for its HUDDLE UP event on June, 2011 that saw more than 100 T-Mobile volunteers provide a full day of volunteer service to South Mountain Middle School.

*Please consider Communities In Schools  
in your estate planning.*

*Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah*

*Season's Greetings*

*From CIS*